

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please cancel claims 1-26, without prejudice or disclaimer, and add new claims 27-57.

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Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-26 (Canceled)

Claim 27 (New): A method of playing a slot machine game using a symbol matrix formed by a plurality of rows intersecting a plurality of columns, the plurality of rows and columns including a plurality of symbols, comprising the steps of:

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(a) wagering upon at least one symbol from the plurality of symbols;

(b) randomly rearranging the plurality of symbols;

(c) displaying the rearranged symbols; and

(d) issuing awards based upon the appearance of two or more symbols wagered upon appearing in adjacent to each other in the symbol matrix, in addition to, or instead of, issuing another award based on the appearance of other of the plurality of symbols not wagered upon appearing on a payline.

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Claim 28 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 27, wherein said wagering step (a) further comprises the step of wagering on all of the symbols from the plurality of symbols.

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Claim 29 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 27, wherein said wagering step (a) further comprises the step of wagering upon a subset of the symbols from the plurality of symbols.

Claim 30 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 27, wherein said
5 wagering step (a) further comprises the step of wagering the same amount on each of the symbols from the plurality of symbols.

Claim 31 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 27, wherein said wagering step (a) further comprises the step of wagering a different amount on each of the symbols from the plurality of symbols.

10 Claim 32 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 27, wherein said wagering step (a) further comprises the step of wagering upon each of the symbols from the plurality of symbols in a predetermined order.

Claim 33 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 27, wherein said
15 wagering step (a) further comprises the step of wagering upon each of the symbols from the plurality of symbols in any order.

Claim 34 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 27, wherein said awarding step (d) further comprises the step of awarding the player based upon the appearance of two or more same symbols wagered upon appearing adjacent to each other.

Claim 35 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 27, wherein said
20 awarding step (d) further comprises the step of issuing awards based upon the appearance of two or more different symbols wagered upon appearing adjacent to each other.

Claim 36 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 27, wherein said awarding step (d) further comprises the step of issuing awards based upon the appearance of one or more symbols wagered upon and one or more wildcard symbols not wagered upon appearing adjacent to each other.

5 Claim 37 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 27, wherein said awarding step (d) further comprises the step of issuing awards based upon the appearance of two or more symbols wagered upon appearing adjacent to each other in at least one of a horizontal, vertical and diagonal direction.

10 Claim 38 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 27, wherein said awarding step (d) further comprises the step of issuing awards based upon the appearance of two or more symbols wagered upon appearing adjacent, with at least one of said symbols appearing in the leftmost column of the symbol matrix.

15 Claim 39 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 27, wherein said awarding step (d) further comprises the step of issuing awards based upon the appearance of two or more symbols wagered upon appearing adjacent, with at most one of said symbols appearing in each column of the symbol matrix.

 Claim 40 (New): A method of playing a slot machine game using a symbol matrix formed by a plurality of rows intersecting a plurality of columns, the plurality of rows and columns including a plurality of symbols, comprising the steps of:

20 (a) wagering upon symbols in the plurality of symbols to be arranged in a predetermined order;

 (b) randomly rearranging the plurality of symbols;

(c) displaying the rearranged symbols; and

(d) issuing awards based upon the appearance of two or more same symbols wagered upon appearing:

(1) with said symbols wagered upon in adjacent to each other in the symbol matrix;

(2) with said symbols wagered upon adjacent to each other in horizontal or diagonal directions;

(3) with at least one of said symbols wagered upon appearing in the leftmost column of the symbol matrix; and

(4) with at most one of said symbols wagered upon appearing in each column of the symbol matrix.

Claim 41 (New): A method of playing a slot machine game using a symbol matrix formed by a plurality of rows intersecting a plurality of columns, the plurality of rows and columns including a plurality of symbols, comprising the steps of:

(a) wagering upon at least one symbol from the plurality of symbols;

(b) randomly rearranging the plurality of symbols;

(c) displaying the rearranged symbols;

(d) upon the appearance of one or more predetermined symbols, repositioning at least one of the symbols displayed in the symbol matrix; and

(e) issuing awards based upon the appearance of two or more symbols wagered upon appearing in adjacent to each other in the symbol matrix.

Claim 42 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 41, wherein said symbol repositioning (d) further comprises the step of placing a symbol with another symbol to allow at least two symbols to occupy a same symbol position.

5 Claim 43 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 41, wherein said symbol repositioning (d) further comprises the step of merging a symbol with another symbol to form a new symbol.

Claim 44 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 41, wherein said symbol repositioning (d) further comprises the step of covering a symbol with another symbol to conceal the covered symbol.

10 Claim 45 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 41, wherein said symbol repositioning (d) further comprises the step of revealing nothing underneath a repositioned symbol.

15 Claim 46 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 41, wherein said symbol repositioning (d) further comprises the step of revealing a symbol underneath a repositioned symbol.

Claim 47 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 41, wherein said symbol repositioning (d) further comprises the step of revealing an award underneath a repositioned symbol.

20 Claim 48 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 41, wherein said symbol repositioning (d) further comprises the step of using an animated character to reposition a symbol.

Claim 49 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 41, wherein said symbol repositioning (d) further comprises the step of repositioning a symbol to another position in the symbol matrix to create a winning combination of adjacent symbols and provide an award for such a combination pursuant to 41(e).

5 Claim 50 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 41, wherein said symbol repositioning (d) further comprises the step of repositioning a symbol to another position in the symbol matrix to create a winning combination of adjacent symbols and provide an award for such a combination pursuant to 41(e), by:

- 10 (a) calculating the award value of repositioning said symbol in each of the positions in the symbol matrix; and
- (b) repositioning said symbol to the position in the symbol matrix with the highest calculated award value.

15 Claim 51 (New): A method of playing a game according to claim 41, wherein said symbol repositioning (d) is initiated by the appearance of a predetermined symbol in rightmost column of the symbol matrix.

 Claim 52 (New): A method of playing a slot machine game using a symbol matrix formed by a plurality of rows intersecting a plurality of columns, the plurality of rows and columns including a plurality of symbols, comprising the steps of:

- 20 (a) wagering upon symbols in the plurality of symbols in a predetermined order;
- (b) randomly rearranging the plurality of symbols;
- (c) displaying the rearranged symbols;

(d) upon the appearance of a predetermined symbol in the rightmost column of the symbol matrix, one symbol is repositioned in the symbol matrix such that:

- (1) the repositioned symbol is located in another position in the symbol matrix resulting in the highest award value under 52(e), if any such award is possible, by:
 - i. calculating the award value of repositioning said symbol in each of the positions in the symbol matrix; and
 - ii. repositioning said symbol to the position in the symbol matrix with the highest calculated award value.
- (2) the repositioned symbol covers another symbol to conceal the covered symbol;
- (3) nothing is revealed underneath a repositioned symbol; and
- (4) an animated monkey character is used to animate the symbol repositioning.

(e) issuing awards based upon the appearance of two or more same symbols wagered upon appearing:

- (1) with said symbols in adjacent to each other in the symbol matrix;
- (2) with said symbols adjacent to each other in horizontal or diagonal directions;
- (3) with at least one of said symbols appearing in the leftmost column of the symbol matrix; and
- (4) with at most one of said symbols appearing in each column of the symbol matrix.

Claim 53 (New): A method of playing a slot machine game using a symbol matrix formed by a plurality of rows intersecting a plurality of columns, the plurality of rows and columns including a plurality of symbols, comprising the steps of:

- (a) wagering by a player to participate;
- (b) randomly rearranging the plurality of symbols;
- (c) displaying the rearranged symbols;
- (d) upon the appearance of one or more predetermined symbols, repositioning of at least one of the symbols displayed in the symbol matrix; and
- (e) awarding the player for predetermined symbol combinations.

Claim 54 (New): A method of playing a slot machine game using a symbol matrix formed by a plurality of rows intersecting a plurality of columns, the plurality of rows and columns including a plurality of symbols, comprising the steps of:

- (a) wagering by a player to participate;
- (b) randomly rearranging the plurality of symbols;
- (c) displaying the rearranged symbols; and
- (d) issuing awards based upon the appearance of two or more symbols appearing in adjacent to each other in the symbol matrix.

Claim 55 (New): A method of playing a slot machine game using a symbol matrix formed by a plurality of rows intersecting a plurality of columns, the plurality of rows and columns including a plurality of symbols, comprising the steps of:

- (a) randomly rearranging the plurality of symbols;
- (b) displaying the rearranged symbols; and
- (c) issuing awards based upon the appearance of two or more same symbols appearing:

- (1) with said symbols in adjacent to each other in the symbol matrix; and
- (2) with said symbols adjacent to each other in horizontal, vertical and/or diagonal directions.

Claim 56 (New): A method of playing a slot machine game using a symbol matrix
5 formed by a plurality of rows intersecting a plurality of columns, the plurality of rows and
columns including a plurality of symbols, comprising the steps of:

- (a) randomly rearranging the plurality of symbols;
- (b) displaying the rearranged symbols; and
- (c) issuing awards based upon the appearance of two or more same symbols appearing:

- 10 (1) with said symbols in adjacent to each other in the symbol matrix;
- (2) with said symbols adjacent to each other in horizontal, vertical and/or diagonal directions; and
- (3) with at least one of said symbols appearing in the leftmost column of the symbol matrix.

15 Claim 57 (New): A method of playing a slot machine game using a symbol matrix
formed by a plurality of rows intersecting a plurality of columns, the plurality of rows and
columns including a plurality of symbols, comprising the steps of:

- (a) randomly rearranging the plurality of symbols;
- (b) displaying the rearranged symbols; and
- 20 (c) issuing awards based upon the appearance of two or more same symbols appearing:

- (1) with said symbols in adjacent to each other in the symbol matrix;
- (2) with said symbols adjacent to each other in horizontal, vertical and/or diagonal directions;

- (3) with at least one of said symbols appearing in the leftmost column of the symbol matrix; and
- (4) with at most one of said symbols appearing in each column of the symbol matrix.